

VZCZCXRO5425
PP RUEHDE RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHDS #1745/01 1560933
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
P 050933Z JUN 07
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6464
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 ADDIS ABABA 001745

SIPDIS

NOFORN
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR: D, P, M, DS, S/CT:B.PHIPPS, CA, INR, AF/EX AND
DS/IP/AF
LONDON, PARIS, ROME FOR AFRICA WATCHER
CJTF-HOA AND USCENTCOM FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/04/2017

TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [PREL](#) [ET](#)

SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA: TERRORIST THREATS AND PLACING THE ONLF
ON THE TERRORIST LIST

REF: A. ADDIS 1598

[B](#). ADDIS 1497

[C](#). ADDIS 1308

[D](#). ADDIS ABABA 1165 (NOTAL)

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DONALD YAMAMOTO. REASON: 1.4 (B), (D) AND (G
)

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST

[1](#)1. (S/NF) Ethiopia's heightened security alerts in response to the kidnappings of British Embassy staff and Ethiopian guides by Afar rebels in February; the killings of Chinese and Ethiopian oil workers by the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) last month; and grenade attacks last week in Jijiga, Deghabur and Fik by suspected ONLF affiliates, have been accentuated by rumors of terrorist threats from Somalia against Ethiopian targets. Police have increased patrols in Addis Ababa and raised security at hotels and restaurants. Of concern to the foreign and diplomatic communities has been the recent violent tactics targeting Ethiopian public gatherings and, more worrying, against projects to discourage foreign investment, as demonstrated by the ONLF announcement in London taking responsibility for the killings of the Chinese and Ethiopian oil workers in the Ogaden (ref C). Ethiopian officials have asked the USG why the ONLF has not been placed on the terrorist list (i.e., either designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization or included on the Terrorist Exclusion List). Post seeks Department's guidance on how the Department views the ONLF, and whether views are shifting on the ONLF.

[1](#)2. (S/NF) Further, in response to Post's Emergency Action Committee meeting (ref A, para 11), with 400 dependents and members of household, the Embassy strongly requested Department support authorizing dependents to have radios, as well as procurement of 100 to 200 additional radios to ensure that dependents can access the Embassy's emergency radio net in case of emergency. (Note: We understand radios will be forthcoming, Post extends appreciation to DS and IM for their support.) END SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST.

13. (S/NF) Ethiopia's security, from police patrols in the capital and other towns, to deployment of troops and additional police to the Somalia border area, has become tighter since Ethiopian troops entered Somalia on December 22, 2006. But security threats began much earlier. In the summer of 2006, according to NGOs, the ONLF began targeting foreigners in the Ogaden area (Ethiopia's Somali Region), taking their vehicles, money, and extra clothes. There were reports of religious friction in a country where there is a high level of religious tolerance. The killings of Christians in Jimma, with videotapes of the killings distributed to raise Christian-Muslim friction, attracted particular concern from the government, and was one reason for the entry into Somalia to fight extremist elements.

14. (S/NF) The kidnapping of five British Embassy staff and eight Ethiopian guides by Afar rebels along the Eritrea border in February sparked concern that Eritrea was behind the kidnappings. Eritrea already supports and helps provide military training for some 30 opposition groups, many targeting Ethiopia. Many of the rebel groups (like the ONLF) which have adopted violent tactics against Ethiopian targets, have been trained in Eritrea.

15. (S/NF) The ONLF killings of seven Chinese and over sixty Ethiopian oil workers and security people last month in the Ogaden area (ref C) marked a new and more violent tactic by the ONLF which now targeted foreigners as well as foreign projects to discourage foreign investment. The ONLF spokesperson in London claimed responsibility for the

ADDIS ABAB 00001745 002 OF 003

killings.

16. (S/NF) The grenade attack killing at least four and wounding scores of other civilians and Ethiopian officials in gatherings in Jijiga, Deghabur, and Fik in the Oromo/Ogaden area by those suspected to be aligned to the ONLF, marks yet another violent tactic by rebel and other groups against Ethiopia. The indiscriminate killing of innocent bystanders in gatherings has raised the specter that future public gatherings of any kind will attract potential terrorist attacks. The upcoming Ethiopian Millennium activities on September 11/12 will attract thousands of foreigners, mostly Ethiopians from the diaspora, and huge crowds in Addis Ababa. Security protection will be impossible and the Millennium celebrations could potentially be targeted by extremist groups, such as the ONLF.

17. (S/NF) The GOE's heightened security alert has led to more arrests and other consequences. A USG contractor with our U.S. Central Command Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTTF-HOA) force protection team was detained for being in the Ogaden area. While two U.S. soldiers were immediately released, the Amcit DOD-contractor (who was born in Ethiopia and currently has family members in the Ogaden) remains detained under suspicion of assisting ONLF extremists. Three New York Times reporters were temporarily detained after meeting and interviewing some ONLF members in the Ogaden.

18. (S/NF) There continue to be rumors of possible terrorist attacks from Somalia-based groups. The Ethiopian Government has become particularly concerned that groups like the ONLF have not been placed on USG terrorist lists, despite their claims of responsibility for the killing of foreigners and civilians. The Ethiopians are also concerned about Eritrea and its continued military training of the ONLF and other rebel groups. Also, it regularly hosts former Islamic Court officials, some of whom are extremists. Ethiopian officials are perplexed as to why Eritrea has not been condemned by the international community for arms shipment to Somalia, according to UN reports, and military training of the ONLF and other groups engaged in violent tactics against Ethiopia.

¶9. (U) Post notes that while Africa-based groups such as Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), South Africa's PAGAD, Congo's ALIR/ex-FAR, and Somalia's Al-Itihaad al-Islamiya (AIAI) have not been designated by the USG as "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," they are listed on the USG's December 2004 Terrorist Exclusion List (TEL). Criteria for inclusion on the TEL include, inter alia: committing or inciting to commit, under circumstances indicating an intention to cause death or serious bodily injury, a terrorist activity; preparing or planning a terrorist activity; gathering information on potential targets for terrorist activity; or providing material support to further terrorist activity. Currently, neither the ONLF nor Ethiopia's Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) appear on either USG list.

EMBASSY SECURITY POSTURE

¶10. (S/NF) We see the security threats in Ethiopia primarily in Ethiopia's Somali Region, in the Ogaden along the border with Somalia. We have placed this region off-limits in our warden messages and Department-approved travel advisories. We are holding more frequent Emergency Action Committee (EAC) meetings, as well as more open country team meetings with Embassy staff and families on security. We are holding our second American community meeting next week to discuss their security concerns. We remain in close contact with the police and security services, but have not received specific threat information that would require a change in our current security procedures for the Embassy, residential units, or public announcements.

¶11. (S/NF) A primary security request from the EAC members and families has been the need for quick communications.

ADDIS ABAB 00001745 003 OF 003

During the November 2005 post-election riots cell phones were down, and communications with family members in town was impossible. Fortunately, no Embassy personnel was injured during the riots which took the lives of 197 people. The one major security enhancement would be the procurement of additional radios. Some 100 to 200 would be required to cover for the nearly 400 dependents and members of household at the Mission.

COMMENT

¶12. (S/NF) Until we see more specificity in the threats, we do not see any reason for a country-specific travel warning for Ethiopia, which is already under a regional travel warning for East Africa. We continue to monitor the current security situation on a daily basis. This message was to review security concerns raised by the Ethiopians and the Mission, actions being taken, and potential challenges for the future, especially the Millennium celebration activities in September; as well as to draw the Department's attention to concerns by post management about addressing potential Post security concerns and also the need to respond to the Ethiopian government about our posture towards the ONLF. END COMMENT.
YAMAMOTO